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ABSTRACT

The goals of the Youth Service Corps (YSC) are: to offer poor youth the opportunity to earn money through police-related employment; to improve the police-community relationship, especially between black youth and the Police Department; to interest youth from minority groups in police careers and other governmental positions; to encourage such youth to remain in school; and to contribute toward the reduction of juvenile crime. The in-school Youth Service Corps enrollment during the Winter-Spring Program 1968-69 included 134 boys between 14 and 18 years. Although corpsmen lived in the police precincts with high rates of juvenile crime, the number of recorded contacts for violations during the YSC enrollment is extremely low. It is recommended that, in the 14 to 16 age groups, the program should continue in the accepted and effective summer "out-of-school" operation. The winter "in-school" operation should be closely directed and should include several work experiences, as well as a regular schedule of training meetings and social activities under a guided self-government organization. (Author/JM)

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DETROIT'S YOUTH SERVICE CORPS

Sponsored by

Neighborhood Service Organization

and the

Youth Bureau of the Detroit Police Department

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June, 1969

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Neighborhood Service Organization,
Mayor's Committee for Human Resources Development
and
the Detroit Police Department

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the summer of 1965, a unique program to improve police-community relations by providing police-oriented work experience to inner-city youth, was inaugurated. This action was taken in response to an expression of concern by the Citizen's Committee for Equal Opportunity, over the need for new programs to improve the relationship between the Police Department and the black community.

Responding to this need, the Neighborhood Service Organization in cooperation with the Youth Bureau of the Detroit Police Department, initiated a pilot program, the Youth Service Corps. Small grants from the McGregor Fund and the United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit made its beginning possible. Over 150 boys in four police precincts volunteered to be Youth Service Corpsmen since there were no funds available for salaries. They were supervised by 43 adults from the Emergency Police Reserve. Many useful tasks were performed by this new group: checking on abandoned cars, searching for lost children, distributing literature on bicycle safety, reporting damaged

traffic signals, acting as crossing guards, etc. But of primary importance, the program gave the boys the opportunity to gain insight into the duties and responsibilities of police officers, while developing cooperative relationships with them. The police officers, for their part, became more familiar with the problems and attitudes of the disadvantaged youth with whom they were working.

The 1965 pilot project was a success and encouraged the Police Department and the Neighborhood Service Organization to continue the program during the summer of 1966.

Working with the Mayor's Committee for Human Resources Development (Total Action Against Poverty in 1966), proposals for expanding the program were drafted and submitted to the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and to the Bureau of Work Programs (NYC) of the Department of Labor. As a result, the 1966 program gave 630 inner-city boys a chance to earn money and gain experience in close working relationship with their neighborhood police. This program thus expanded from a $5,000.00 pilot project in 1965 to a $250,000.00 eight-week project in 1966.

During the third summer of operation, 1967, the Youth Service Corps had approximately the same number of boys enrolled in the program as the previous summer. However, because of financing difficulties, funds were received from three different sources:

The Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC), The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and a combined NYC/OEO grant. The first group of 210 boys (30 per precinct) were paid under the NYC grant. The second group of 210 boys started work about the middle of July and all costs for these boys were funded by the OEO. The third group of 210 boys started later in the summer and were financed under a combined grant; OEO funded the administrative cost while the boys' wages were paid by the NYC.

During the school year 1967-68, the NYC financed an in-school (winter-spring) Youth Service Corps program. The in-school phase included a Saturday work-training experience and the formation of Future Police Cadet Clubs in seven high schools corresponding to the seven inner-city police precincts. The Saturday work sessions were a continuation of the summer operation, with two work units in each of the seven police precincts. The school clubs, which met on alternate Thursdays for two hours after regular classes, were designed to encourage the interest of the members toward future police careers and to stress the value of and the need for education. Further, counselling services were provided to individual corpsmen.

Under a grant received from the NYC there were 200 boys enrolled in the 1968 summer program. This represented a sharp decrease in the level of summer programs operated since 1966.

Consequently several hundred eager applicants had to be turned away by the program in 1968.

In spite of almost constant financing problems, the Youth Service Corps has operated with increasing effectiveness since 1966 in the following seven police precincts:

Precinct # 2	2801 West Vernor
Precinct # 4	7140 West Fort
Precinct # 5	11411 East Jefferson
Precinct # 6	6840 McGraw
Precinct # 7	3300 Mack Avenue
Precinct # 10	12000 Livernois
Precinct # 13	4747 Woodward Avenue

PROGRAM GOALS

One of the goals of the Youth Service Corps is to employ and train youth who are poor and vulnerable to delinquency. On a broader scale the Youth Service Corps is a program designed to reduce social tensions by improving relationships between the black community and the Detroit Police Department. This means changing the behavior of youth and policemen as they relate to each other. One means of improving relationships between people is through work assignments and associations; a simple notion, but the three year experience of the Youth Service Corps has demonstrated that positive work association between inner-city youth and police

officers can produce change in behavior and attitudes for both groups. The role of corpsman allows a delinquency prone youth a conflict-free relationship with police officers. The corpsman's role is mutually gratifying to the boy and the policeman. It increases understanding and sensitivity on the part of both groups.

Another goal of the Youth Service Corps is to create interest among the youth of Detroit - and particularly among black youth - in future law enforcement careers. Upon being admitted to the program many boys have the idea that police work is extremely dangerous and low paying. They imagine that policemen are in gun fights on a daily basis. One of the jobs of the Youth Service Corps staff is to give these youth a more realistic picture of the salaries and daily activities of police officers. A survey conducted at the end of the 1968 summer program indicated that about 30 boys openly expressed the desire to join the Police Cadet Program upon completion of high school.

The Youth Service Corps attempts to keep its members in school. This is done by demonstrating the relationship between work and classroom activities. Reporting abandoned cars, writing up safety violation reports, etc. all serve to make real the need to stay in school in order to secure adequate employment at a later date. In this way the boys are encouraged to complete their education and subsequently enroll in the Police Department's Cadet

Program or other related governmental employment that is available to them. The fact that last school year only one boy enrolled in the program dropped out of school speaks to the degree the program has helped inner-city youth remain in school.

Much of recorded crime is juvenile crime, and most of this crime occurs in low-income areas. The high season for juvenile crime is the summer when it is hot and boys are idle. The Youth Service Corps has as another of its goals the reduction of juvenile crime. Summer work is one obvious remedy for idleness. However, in a more meaningful manner, it is necessary to produce employment that does more than merely keep inner-city youth busy. Throughout the country, youth from low-income neighborhoods have become wise to summer projects designed to "cool them off." In this sense the Youth Service Corps not only provides work that is beneficial to the Police Department and the community at large, but it provides work that is acceptable to and sought by inner-city youth. During the summer program for 1966, when funding allowed for 630 corpsmen, nearly one-thousand boys applied for positions the first two days of announced recruiting. Many of these boys were not referred by formal organizations, but instead heard of the program from friends and neighbors.

In terms of crime prevention, the community status and role of Youth Service corpsmen with the Police Department, in

effect a leadership role, appears incompatible with the role of juvenile delinquent -- a law offender. Daily reports from the Police Department's Youth Bureau and periodic checks of Youth Bureau records indicate that few corpsmen are in trouble with the police. For example, during the summer of 1967 some 630 boys participated in the program; only 3.2% of the boys had <u>any</u> recorded contact with the police for misbehavior, as compared to a 17.5% record of contact prior to enrollment in the program.

Also, of the 350 enrollees in the program during the 1967 summer's civil disturbance, only three boys were arrested. This is especially notable when one considers that four of the Youth Service Corps' precincts (#5, #7, #10 and #13) were the scenes of widespread burning, looting, and violence.

In summary, the stated goals of the Youth Service Corps are as follows:

A) To offer poor youth the opportunity to earn money through police-related employment.

B) To improve the police-community relationship, especially between black youth and the Police Department.

C) To interest youth from minority groups in police careers and other governmental positions.

D) To encourage such youth to remain in school.

E) To contribute toward the reduction of juvenile crime.

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS - YSC ENROLLEES

Following is a brief description of the in-school Youth Service Corps enrollment during the Winter-Spring Program 1968-69. Knowledge of the social characteristics of the enrollees is essential to future goals and planning. This is certainly true if a concerted effort is to be made in linking "graduates" with organizations offering education, training, and employment.

I. AGE OF ENROLLEES

There were 134 boys between 14 and 18 years enrolled in the program. The following Table is a breakdown by age:

TABLE I

Age	Number	Percentage
14	8	6
15	27	20
16	57	43
17	36	27
18	6	4
	134	100 Total

As indicated above, most corpsmen (boys) were under 18 years of age. Until this year's creation of "Senior Corpsmen," a position offering higher pay and prestige, the attraction of better paying part-time jobs caused many of the corpsmen to leave the program. At that time, of the 93 corpsmen in the age range between 16-17 years, 20 of them were senior corpsmen. This position was created as a means of preparing and retaining qualified

applicants for government employment, especially the Police Cadet Program.

II. LENGTH OF ENROLLMENT -- as of December, 1968

TABLE II

Enrollment Date	Months	Number	Percentage
May, 1967	18½	82	61
June, 1967	17½	7	5
July, 1967	16½	7	5
September, 1967	15½	1	1
June, 1968	5½	3	2
July, 1968	4½	13	10
October, 1968	1½	9	7
November, 1968	1	12	9
		134	100 Total

Table II above shows that the majority (61%) of the corpsmen were in the program for 18 months or more. It appears from Table III that older corpsmen begin to withdraw from the program during their senior year in high school.

III. GRADE LEVEL

TABLE III

Grade	Number	Percentage
7	1	1
8	5	3
9	19	14
10	41	31
11	56	42
12	12	9
	134	100 Total

At the time of this report, all corpsmen were enrolled in school. As Table III indicates, 12 corpsmen were scheduled for high school graduation and, consequently, were potential applicants for various government jobs.

III. FAMILY BACKGROUND

Corpsmen, in general, were from large, low-income families, most with several school age children. The average family size was 7.5 members with an average income of about $4,120.00 per year. The actual family income could not be computed because 30 (or about 22%) of the families were receiving public assistance and boys of such families were admitted to the program without recording the family's income. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the mean income for a YSC family of seven would be substantially less than $4,000.00 per year.

IV. LIVING SITUATION

TABLE IV

Home	Number	Percentage
Mother only	52	39
Father only	2	1
Both parents	70	53
Mother, stepfather	2	1
Grandparents	6	5
Court appointed home	2	1
	134	100 Total

Although Table IV reveals that most (52%) of the corpsmen had both parents present in the home, a large percentage (39%) live in homes without fathers. One of the aims of the program is to provide appropriate male models for fatherless boys.

Corpsmen lived in the police precincts with high rates of juvenile crime. Yet, the number of recorded contacts for violations during the YSC enrollment is estremely low. Of the 134 boys enrolled during this time, 20 (or 15%) had previous police contact. However, daily reports from the Youth Bureau of the Detroit Police Department and a recent check of Youth Bureau records indicate that of the 134 enrollees only <u>two</u> had recorded police contact since enrolling in the program.

PERSONNEL

As noted earlier, the Youth Service Corps was sponsored by the Neighborhood Service Organization. Within the NSO structure the program had its own staff and advisory committee. In addition to NSO's central administrative staff, a project director and one assistant director were responsible for the maintenance and operation of the program. Each of the seven police precincts had a "Police Coordinator" who was a policeman employed during his off-duty time as the supervisor of the program at the precinct level. Some of the coordinator's primary responsibilities were the assignment of patrol areas, maintenance of weekly time reports, reporting

the boys' behavioral or health problems, and assigning adult leaders and boys to work units.

Each work unit of ten boys was supervised by an adult leader (or "street supervisor") who generally was a member of the police reserve, active in community youth affairs or regularly employed as a teacher. The street supervisor checked the work of his unit and channelled reports received from the boys on abandoned cars, houses, etc. to the police coordinator. The supervisor was responsible for the performance and appearance of his unit.

An advisory committee, made up of representatives of the participating agencies and community groups, served to evaluate and expedite the work of the Youth Service Corps staff. Mr. Donald H. Parsons of the NSO Board of Directors chaired the committee.

THE NEED FOR THE PROGRAM

After considering juvenile crime, school drop-outs, and other city problems, police-community relations is one of the most pressing problems in urban America. During the past five years the latent anti-police feelings of minority groups have surfaced. Burdened with the related problems of poverty and racism, it is difficult for the police to establish a relationship of faith and trust with community groups. Moreover, the difficulty of this task is compounded by the differential law enforcement applied in

the inner-city, and, further, by the lack of personal contact between the patrolman in the scout car and the citizen on the street. The day of the patrolman on the beat when policeman and citizen were on a first name basis is a thing of the past. Today we must cope with the real problem of depersonalization of both the citizen and the policeman. If we are to solve the problem, and if the police are to obtain citizen cooperation - a requirement for effective law enforcement - there must be strategies that provide policemen with humanizing functions at the community level. That is, police officers must have enabling functions or "helping roles" that are visible and significantly different from their present roles, which are viewed by many as punitive and restrictive. It is especially necessary to provide the police with helping roles if the police are to appear as other than an "occupation force" to the black community.

The police, then, must have some acceptable means of entering the community to provide social service. For example, there are several new programs (such as Atlanta's Crime Prevention Bureau and New York's "Operation Friend") where policemen counsel school drop-outs, provide needy families with food, and help men find employment. These programs have been reported as successful in improving police-community relations. The social intent of these

programs and the Youth Service Corps is similar. However, the Youth Service Corps has the additional advantages of providing useful employment for poor youth, giving youth a realistic look at police activities and responsibilities, and attempting to recruit minority youth for police careers.

This innovative program, the first of its kind in the country, offers the City of Detroit one means of improving police-community relations.

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW AND EXPANDED ACTIVITIES

Street patrol (locating abandoned cars, etc.) has value for both the Police Department and the boys. Yet, if we are to improve boy-police relationships and provide meaningful work, we must create natural work situations that offer boys and police officers positive contact.

The following are some suggested means of accomplishing this:

A. Increase distribution of police literature.

   1. Information regarding crime prevention and reporting.

   2. Information regarding automobiles; such as locking cars, parking lots, city ordinance concerning inoperable motor vehicles on private property (Ordinance No. 129G, Chapter 38, Article 17).

   3. Information to business men regarding bogus checks, etc.

B. Expand use of corpsmen with pedestrian traffic.

   1. Use of corpsmen at downtown street corners during rush hour traffic; several corpsmen could be assigned to

an officer who is responsible for directing automobile traffic.

2. Systematic use of corpsmen at parades, day-time sporting events, etc.

C. Have corpsmen assist precinct commander with his community relations program.

D. Allow corpsmen to perform various duties in the Youth Bureau Office on a rotating basis.

E. In addition to police violations, have corpsmen report other violations to the Health Department (trash cans without lids, etc.) and to the Fire Department.

F. Use of corpsmen, especially "senior corpsmen," at Police Headquarters as couriers, laboratory assistants, etc.

G. Cruiser tours with police officers.

H. Foot patrol with policemen in a low crime area.

I. Assignment of corpsmen on a temporary basis to precincts other than their neighborhood precinct.

J. Allow senior corpsmen to attend certain lectures and activities at the Police Academy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Careful review of the Youth Service Corps project and its effect on the boys and their communities, along with general acclaim for its apparent success, has encouraged the sponsoring agencies to develop a program which would assure continuity. Although the demonstration project is novel and is drawing considerable attention from other communities, the extended program is even more innovative in concept.

Basically, the anticipated extension would encompass participants in a year-round program, covering school, vacation, and ultimately, careers in police or relation occupations. The planning would incorporate three phases: (1) membership in the Youth Service Corps (14 & 15 year olds); (2) continued membership (16 year olds) with the addition of leadership responsibilities in the Youth Service Corps and cooperative work-school assignments in governmental or related agencies in "Junior Police Cadet" classifications; and (3) employment as "Police Cadets" (17 through 20 years of age) in the present police program for cadet employment.

Thus, the proposed program could extend over a seven-year period of the boys' growth and educational years. Obviously, the influence of such association would be a major force in encouraging the participants to stay in school, acquire a better education, learn and demonstrate civic responsibility, and maintain better personal habits of health and morality.

It should be emphasized that the prime target of the program is the inner city youth. This is a source from which the Police Department has been unable to recruit membership over the years and a source from which, it is believed, a large volume of potential police officers could and should be drawn. It should also be noted that constant contact, under these conditions, with youth from the high crime areas can bring about a much closer relationship

between the police and the community, a matter of great concern to every police agency today.

It is important, also, to emphasize the stay-in-school aspect of the proposed program. We cannot anticipate that every member, beginning with his 14th birthday, will grow to adulthood and qualify physically and mentally for police work. Such aspirations, while certainly desirable and worthy of encouragement, must be met with understanding and with alternatives for the non-qualifiers which can satisfy and reward his efforts. This, at least in some measure, will be possible with the expected educational level which will be encouraged.

While the previously noted emphasis on "prime target" areas is important to the goals which we seek, it is also planned that the extension of the program should include boys from other and less deprived areas of the city. This is a necessary balance for future employment and should incorporate those youths who have demonstrated needs for the inspiration and encouragement which the Youth Service Corps and allied programming proposes.

Specifically, in the 14 to 16 age groups, the program should continue in the accepted and effective summer "out-of-school" operation, as reported heretofore. The winter or "in-school" operation should be closely directed and should include several work experiences (Saturdays and/or after-school) as well as a regular schedule

of training meetings and social activities under a guided self-government organization.

In the contest for use of funds available for the promotion of human rights and values, the Youth Service Corps should rank high on its record. It is strongly recommended that the MCHRD through the NYC continue to seek a source of sponsorship and permanent funding for it.